

**AVELLA AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
1000 AVELLA ROAD
AVELLA, PA 15312**

BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES

September 16, 2026

The Regular Board Meeting of the Avella Area School District Board of Education was held in the Avella Jr. Sr. High School Library on Wednesday, September 16, 2026. Mr. Emanuel Paris, Board President, called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m. An Executive Session was held prior to the meeting to discuss transportation, teaching positions, and facilities. An Executive Session was held after the adjournment of the regular meeting to further discuss personnel. Dana Davis, Board Secretary, held roll call and the following board members were present:

BOARD MEMBERS: Elmo Cecchetti, Susanne Colilla, Melissa Dryer, Beth Dunmore, Kimberly Mace, Emanuel Paris, and Tia Shore.
Absent: James Gagich

ADMINISTRATION: Cyril Walther, Superintendent
John Galvin, Business Manager
Heather Zalar, JSBS Principal - Absent
Carrie Graff, Elementary Principal
Donald Snoke, Educational Consultant
Dana M. Davis, Board Secretary

OTHERS: Rachel Lozosky, District Solicitor

A. GENERAL PROCEDURES

Roll Call

Pledge of Allegiance

Presentations/Recognitions

1. PSBA recognizes and presents a Certificate of Appreciation to Suzanne Colilla, School Board Director, in recognition of her ongoing school board service.
2. The following students are recognized as the September Students of the Month:
Paisley Downey – Senior
Brylin Dorsey – 6th Grade Student

Request to Speak at the Board Meeting

Visitor's Request to Speak on Agenda Items

GENERAL PROCEDURE ITEMS

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

ATTACHMENT "A"

Board Members were furnished copies of the Board Minutes for the August 2026 Regular Board Meeting and the June 2026 Special Meeting.

Moved by Mr. Cecchetti, seconded by Ms. Shore, to approve the August 2026 Regular Board Meeting.

ROLL CALL: Mr. Cecchetti, Ms. Colilla, Ms. Dryer, Ms. Dunmore, Ms. Mace, Mr. Paris, and Ms. Shore said "aye". Motion carried 7-0.

2. APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

ATTACHMENT "B"

Board Members were furnished copies of the Accounts Payable for the August and September 2026 General Fund.

Moved by Mr. Cecchetti, seconded by Ms. Shore, to approve the Accounts Payable for the August and September 2026 General Fund.

ROLL CALL: Mr. Cecchetti, Ms. Colilla, Ms. Dryer, Ms. Dunmore, Ms. Mace, Mr. Paris, and Ms. Shore said "aye". Motion carried 7-0.

3. FINANCIAL/BUDGET REPORTS

ATTACHMENT "C"

4. SOLICITOR'S REPORT

ATTACHMENT "D"

5. BOARD MEETING DATE CHANGE

The November Board meeting will be on **Wednesday, November 4, 2026** due to the original date falling on a No School day.

B. NEW BUSINESS

Independence Township Board Position

Jeffrey Devenney, Independence Township Board Member

Moved by Ms. Dunmore, seconded by Ms. Colilla, to appoint Jeffrey Devenney to the Independence Township Board Member position created by the resignation of Terry Jacobs, September 16, 2026 - December 2, 2027.

ROLL CALL: Mr. Cecchetti, Ms. Colilla, Ms. Dryer, Ms. Dunmore, Ms. Mace, Mr. Paris, and Ms. Shore said "aye". Motion carried 7-0.

Oath of Office will be administered to Jeffrey Devenney.

1. ATHLETIC & ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

a. ~~Samantha Jacobs, Junior Class Sponsor — Resignation~~

The following motion was ***struck*** from the agenda by Board Secretary, Dana Davis, because Samantha Jacobs will remain as the Junior Class Sponsor for the 2026-2027 school year.

Motion to accept the resignation of Samantha Jacobs as the Junior Class Sponsor for the 2026-2027 school year.

B. NEW BUSINESS

1. ATHLETIC & ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE, continued

b. Erika Minch, Junior Class Sponsor

The following motion was **struck** from the agenda by Board Secretary, Dana Davis, because Samantha Jacobs will remain as the Junior Class Sponsor for the 2026-2027 school year.

Motion to approve Erika Minch as the Junior Class Sponsor for the 2026-2027 school year. (The Avella Area Education Association has waived the contractual internal posting requirement to facilitate a timely process).

c. John T. Mylan, Assistant varsity Baseball Coach – Resignation

Moved by Mr. Cecchetti, seconded by Ms. Dryer to accept the resignation of John T. Mylan as the Assistant Baseball Coach for the 2026-2027 season.

ROLL CALL: Mr. Cecchetti, Ms. Colilla, Mr. Devenney, Ms. Dryer, Ms. Dunmore, Ms. Mace, Mr. Paris, and Ms. Shore said “aye”. Motion carried 8-0.

d. Homecoming Events

Wednesday, September 30, 2026

6:30 pm Homecoming Parade on Campbell Street (Main Street), followed by Bonfire at Avella Fire Department

Friday, October 2, 2026

6:30 pm Pre-game: Avella Marching Band
7:00 pm Kickoff: Avella vs. West Greene
Halftime Crowning of Homecoming King/Queen
Post-game Avella Marching Band Halftime Performance

Saturday, October 3, 2026

7:00 pm Homecoming Dance @ Avella Jr./Sr. High School Cafeteria

2. COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

3. CURRICULUM & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

a. Western Area Career & Technology Center Update

Board Representative Melissa Dryer provided an update from the Western Area Career & Technology Center's August Meeting. WACTC hired two new instructors for the Robotics and Sports Medicine programs. The Adult Education Center held its ribbon-cutting ceremony. The Center continues to pursue funding for the CDL Diesel Technology Program. The Culinary Department also purchased new equipment. Currently, all programs/shops are filled and have waiting lists.

b. IU1 Partial Hospitalization Program Services Agreement

Moved by Mr. Cecchetti, seconded by Mr. Paris to retroactively approve the Services Agreement between Avella Area School District and Intermediate Unit 1 to confirm participation in the Partial Hospitalization Program (PHP) for the 2026-2027 school year, per Attachment Curriculum & Technology “A”.

ROLL CALL: Mr. Cecchetti, Ms. Colilla, Mr. Devenney, Ms. Dryer, Ms. Dunmore, Ms. Mace, Mr. Paris, and said “aye”. Motion carried 8-0.

B. NEW BUSINESS

3. CURRICULUM & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE, continued

c. Washington County Probation Services - MOU

Moved by Mr. Cecchetti, seconded by Mr. Paris, to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the Avella Area School District and Washington County Juvenile Probation to provide services for the Student Assistance Program (SAP) for the 2026-2027 school year, per Attachment Curriculum & Technology "B".

ROLL CALL: Mr. Cecchetti, Ms. Colilla, Mr. Devenney, Ms. Dryer, Ms. Dunmore, Ms. Mace, Mr. Paris, and said "aye". Motion carried 8-0.

d. Junior Achievement – Biz Town Contract

Moved by Mr. Cecchetti, seconded by Mr. Paris, to approve the Financial Assistance Contract/Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Junior Achievement (JA) of Western Pennsylvania and Avella Area School District for attendance at JA Biz Town during the 2026-2027 school year, per Attachment Curriculum & Technology "C".

ROLL CALL: Mr. Cecchetti, Ms. Colilla, Mr. Devenney, Ms. Dryer, Ms. Dunmore, Ms. Mace, Mr. Paris, and said "aye". Motion carried 8-0.

e. Inventory Control – Elementary Textbooks

Moved by Mr. Cecchetti, seconded by Mr. Paris, to approve the disposal of outdated Elementary textbooks as listed on Attachment Curriculum & Technology "D".

ROLL CALL: Mr. Cecchetti, Ms. Colilla, Mr. Devenney, Ms. Dryer, Ms. Dunmore, Ms. Mace, Mr. Paris, and said "aye". Motion carried 8-0.

f. School Calendar - Revision– 2026-2027

Moved by Mr. Cecchetti, seconded by Mr. Paris, to approve the following revision to the Avella Area School District Calendar for the 2026-2027 school year.

Friday, August 28, 2026 – No School (Cancelled due to Power Outage)
Thursday, March 25, 2027 – Makeup Snow Day

ROLL CALL: Mr. Cecchetti, Ms. Colilla, Mr. Devenney, Ms. Dryer, Ms. Dunmore, Ms. Mace, Mr. Paris, and said "aye". Motion carried 8-0.

4. FACILITIES & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

a. GG&C Substitute Driver List

Moved by Ms. Dryer, seconded by Ms. Colilla, to approve the following to the GG&C Bus/Van Driver List:

- Mackenzie Barker
- Keith Breese
- Jeffrey Lowery
- Francis Partozoti
- Denise Reese
- Donald Seibert
- Courtney Taylor
- Michelle Warchol

ROLL CALL: Mr. Cecchetti, Ms. Colilla, Mr. Devenney, Ms. Dryer, Ms. Dunmore, Ms. Mace, Mr. Paris, and said "aye". Motion carried 8-0.

B. NEW BUSINESS

4. FACILITIES & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE, continued

a. Purchase of School Van

Moved by Ms. Dryer, seconded by Ms. Colilla, to retroactively approve the purchase of a 2014 Chevrolet Express 2500 Series 10 passenger school van, through the Municibid Auction, for the purchase price of \$15,000.

ROLL CALL: Mr. Cecchetti, Ms. Colilla, Mr. Devenney, Ms. Dryer, Ms. Dunmore, Ms. Mace, Mr. Paris, and said "aye". Motion carried 8-0.

5. FINANCE COMMITTEE

b. Water Line Progress Payment

Moved by Ms. Driver, seconded by Ms. Dunmore, to approve the progress payment in the amount of \$251,364.60 to Preferred Plumbing for the construction of the water line project, as verified by the project engineer, per Attachment Finance "A".

ROLL CALL: Mr. Cecchetti, Ms. Colilla, Mr. Devenney, Ms. Dryer, Ms. Dunmore, Ms. Mace, Mr. Paris, and said "aye". Motion carried 8-0.

c. FFA National Convention Transportation Cost

Moved by Ms. Dryer, seconded by Ms. Dunmore, to approve covering the transportation cost for seven FFA students attending the national FFA Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana, October 21-24, 2026, at a cost of \$170 per student, for a total cost of \$1,190.00.

ROLL CALL: Mr. Cecchetti, Ms. Colilla, Mr. Devenney, Ms. Dryer, Ms. Dunmore, Ms. Mace, Mr. Paris, and said "aye". Motion carried 8-0.

6. NEGOTIATIONS COMMITTEE

7. PERSONNEL & POLICY COMMITTEE

d. Samantha Jacobs – Fifth Grade Teacher

Moved by Ms. Dryer, seconded by Mr. Cecchetti, to retroactively approve Samantha Jacobs as a full-time Elementary Fifth Grade Teacher (due to Marie Smitsky's transfer into a Third Grade Classroom).

ROLL CALL: Mr. Cecchetti, Ms. Colilla, Mr. Devenney, Ms. Dryer, Ms. Dunmore, Ms. Mace, Mr. Paris, and said "aye". Motion carried 8-0.

e. ~~Full Time Secondary Special Education Teacher~~

The following motion was **struck** from the agenda by Board Secretary, Dana Davis, because this position has not been filled at the time of the meeting.

Motion to approve hiring _____ to the position of Full-Time Secondary Education Teacher (due to the transfer of Samantha Jacobs to the Elementary), temporary professional employee, Step ____, per AEA contract.

B. NEW BUSINESS

7. PERSONNEL & POLICY COMMITTEE, continued

a. Karleigh Kowcheck – Resignation

Moved by Ms. Dryer, seconded by Mr. Cecchetti, to accept the resignation of Karleigh Kowcheck as Half-Time Art/Half-Time Elementary Teacher, effective August 10, 2026.

ROLL CALL: Mr. Cecchetti, Ms. Colilla, Mr. Devenney, Ms. Dryer, Ms. Dunmore, Ms. Mace, Mr. Paris, and said “aye”. Motion carried 8-0.

b. Half-Time Art Teacher/Half-Time Elementary Teacher – Posting

Moved by Ms. Dryer, seconded by Mr. Cecchetti, to ratify the posting and advertisement for a Half-Time Art/Half time Elementary Teacher.

ROLL CALL: Mr. Cecchetti, Ms. Colilla, Mr. Devenney, Ms. Dryer, Ms. Dunmore, Ms. Mace, Mr. Paris, and said “aye”. Motion carried 8-0.

c. Jameson Murray, Half Time Art/Half Time Elementary Teacher

Moved by Ms. Dryer, seconded by Mr. Cecchetti, to approve hiring Jameson Murray to the position of Half-Time Art/Half-Time Elementary Teacher, temporary professional employee, Step 1, per AEA contract.

ROLL CALL: Mr. Cecchetti, Ms. Colilla, Mr. Devenney, Ms. Dryer, Ms. Dunmore, Ms. Mace, Mr. Paris, and said “aye”. Motion carried 8-0.

d. Linda Gagliani, Full-Time Elementary Paraprofessional – Retirement

Moved by Ms. Dryer, seconded by Mr. Cecchetti, to retroactively accept the retirement notice of Linda Gagliani, Full-Time Paraprofessional effective August 27, 2026.

ROLL CALL: Mr. Cecchetti, Ms. Colilla, Mr. Devenney, Ms. Dryer, Ms. Dunmore, Ms. Mace, Mr. Paris, and said “aye”. Motion carried 8-0.

e. Full-Time Elementary Paraprofessional - Posting

Moved by Ms. Dryer, seconded by Mr. Cecchetti, to retroactively approve the posting for a Full-Time Paraprofessional in the Elementary (due to the retirement of Linda Gagliani).

ROLL CALL: Mr. Cecchetti, Ms. Colilla, Mr. Devenney, Ms. Dryer, Ms. Dunmore, Ms. Mace, Mr. Paris, and said “aye”. Motion carried 8-0.

f. Anticipated Part-Time Elementary Paraprofessional – Posting

Moved by Ms. Dryer, seconded by Mr. Cecchetti, to retroactively approve the posting for an *anticipated* Part-Time Paraprofessional Position (should the current part-time aide transfer into the full-time position).

ROLL CALL: Mr. Cecchetti, Ms. Colilla, Mr. Devenney, Ms. Dryer, Ms. Dunmore, Ms. Mace, Mr. Paris, and said “aye”. Motion carried 8-0.

g. Desiree Dayak – Full-Time Elementary Paraprofessional

Moved by Ms. Dryer, seconded by Mr. Cecchetti, to approve Desiree Dayak as the Full-Time Elementary Paraprofessional, effective the start of the 2026-2027 school year.

ROLL CALL: Mr. Cecchetti, Ms. Colilla, Mr. Devenney, Ms. Dryer, Ms. Dunmore, Ms. Mace, Mr. Paris, and said “aye”. Motion carried 8-0.

h. Samantha Birdsall – Part-Time Elementary Paraprofessional

Moved by Ms. Dryer, seconded by Mr. Cecchetti, to approve Samantha Birdsall as the Part-Time Elementary Paraprofessional, effective August 25, 2026, contingent upon her successful completion of the Para-Pro Assessment, which was passed on August 30, 2026.

ROLL CALL: Mr. Cecchetti, Ms. Colilla, Mr. Devenney, Ms. Dryer, Ms. Dunmore, Ms. Mace, Mr. Paris, and said “aye”. Motion carried 8-0.

i. Makaylee DePetro-Kelvington, Licensed Professional Counselor

Moved by Ms. Dryer, seconded by Mr. Cecchetti, to approve Makaylee DePetro-Kelvington as a Licensed Professional Counselor, per Attachment Personnel & Policy “A”.

ROLL CALL: Mr. Cecchetti, Ms. Colilla, Mr. Devenney, Ms. Dryer, Ms. Dunmore, Ms. Mace, Mr. Paris, and said “aye”. Motion carried 8-0.

j. Substitute Support Personnel List – Update

Moved by Ms. Dryer, seconded by Mr. Cecchetti, to add Linda Gagliani to the Substitute Support Personnel List as a JSHS Aide for the 2026-2027 school year.

ROLL CALL: Mr. Cecchetti, Ms. Colilla, Mr. Devenney, Ms. Dryer, Ms. Dunmore, Ms. Mace, Mr. Paris, and said “aye”. Motion carried 8-0.

k. School Volunteer List

Moved by Ms. Dryer, seconded by Mr. Cecchetti, to approve the updated Volunteer List for the 2026-2027 school year, per Attachment Personnel & Policy “B”.

ROLL CALL: Mr. Cecchetti, Ms. Colilla, Mr. Devenney, Ms. Dryer, Ms. Dunmore, Ms. Mace, Mr. Paris, and said “aye”. Motion carried 8-0.

8. SAFETY COMMITTEE

a. A Safety Committee Meeting is scheduled for October 1, 2026 at 9:00 a.m.

C. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Board, moved by Mr. Devenney, seconded by Ms. Dryer, to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Mr. Cecchetti, Ms. Colilla, Ms. Dryer, Ms. Dunmore, Mr. Gagich, Mr. Jacobs, Ms. Mace, Mr. Paris, and said “aye”. Motion carried 8-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Dana M. Davis
Board Secretary